

Iowa Fishing Report

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The Iowa Department of Natural Resources issues a weekly fishing report on Thursdays in an effort to provide the latest information heading into the weekend. The weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys, and county and state parks staff. For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

Southeast

Many of the boat ramps are open in **Mississippi River Pools 16 to 20**. There are some ice chunks floating in the main channel so take caution when boating. **Ice conditions in the backwaters are unsafe for ice fishing.**

In **Pool 16**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 15 is 5.82 feet. Walleye and sauger fishing has been good on jig and minnow combinations. Most anglers have been targeting the wing dams around Credit Island and drifting by the Casino on the Iowa side. Anglers have been catching mostly saugers with a few small walleyes mixed in.

In **Pool 17**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 16 is 4.71 feet. Walleye and sauger fishing at the dam has been slow. In **Pool 18**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 17 is 5.74 feet. Walleye and sauger fishing has been good at the dam on jig and minnow combinations. In **Pool 19**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 18 is 3.21 feet. Walleye and sauger fishing has been slow. In **Pool 20**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 19 is 5.3 feet. No fishing report.

Lake Belva Deer (Keokuk): Unsafe ice conditions.

Lake Geode (Henry): Unsafe ice conditions.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Keomah (Mahaska): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Wapello (Davis): The lake has been completely drained.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Jones, Cedar, Linn, Johnson, Benton, Iowa, Poweshiek, Tama, Grundy, and Marshall Counties: Ice fishing is still taking place in many areas. **However, use extreme caution when venturing out on the ice.** The thickness may be variable, especially around the edges where thawing occurs fastest. Conditions are day to day, please call the specific lake for up to date conditions.

Iowa River (Johnson): Some walleyes are being picked up below the dams. Try bright colored twisters due to the dirty water conditions. Tipping them with a minnow can also help.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Southwest

Central Iowa ice conditions were still good early in the week, but two days in the 50s and possible rains may weaken ice, especially around the edges. Use caution later in the week. Predicted cold weekend temperatures should improve the conditions again.

Hickory Grove (Story): Conditions are good with around 12 inches of ice. Some anglers are doing well late in the afternoon before sunset on crappies and bluegills using wax worms near the island. Most of the bluegills being caught are in the 7 to 8-inch range with some up to 9 inches and the crappies are 9 to 10 inches with some up to 11 inches.

Big Creek (Polk): Ice conditions are good with 11 to 14 inches of ice. Both bluegill and crappie fishing is good over brush piles. The best bite has been mid day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bluegills slow down towards dark, but the crappies continue to be caught after sunset. The most productive areas have been on the roadbed out from the Ensign Shelter parking area, and out from the marina in 20 feet of water. Chartreuse or pink glowing jigs tipped with wax worms, spikes, or minnow heads have been the best producers.

Contact Ben Dodd at (515) 432-2823, Ext.108, for information on the above area lakes

Ice conditions are highly variable and can range from open water to a thickness that would support an angler on the same water body. Recent warm days have opened up what ice that was formed over the past weekend. Some mid-sized lakes have more open water than ice covered areas. Walking on the ice is not recommended anywhere in the southwest or south central Iowa. Anglers can use a boat to access many of the same areas.

Three Mile Lake (Union): Ice is poor and open water exists around the edges a several areas of the mid portion.

Twelve Mile Lake (Union): The lake has areas of open water and the ice is in poor condition.

Lake Icaria (Adams): The mid portion of the lake is open.

Contact Gary Sobotka at (641) 464-3108 for information on the above area lakes.

Most lakes have open water and remaining ice is rotten. Ice fishing is not recommended.

Big Lake (Pottawattamie): The lake is open and anglers have reported catching limits of trout on white twister tails.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): The lake is completely open and anglers are catching limits of crappies in the canals. Anglers having the most success are using white jigs tipped with minnows.

Contact Bryan Hayes at (712) 769-2587 for information on the above area lakes.

For more information on general fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Access to the lake is limited because of pressure ridges that have expanded. Most anglers are gaining access onto the lake at Crandall's Beach. Anglers can park and walk onto the lake at the Hale Slough boat ramp, Mini-Wakan State Park, Buffalo Run, Marble Beach Boat Ramp and the pump house.

Bluegills are being caught in Angler's Bay along the weed beds and open areas or at the North Grade along the remnant lily pad field with small ice jigs tipped with wax worms. Yellow perch are being caught in the main lake basin from the pump house north towards Crandall Beach or at the North Grade using jigging lures tipped with live bait or a slip bobber rig baited with a minnow. For crappies, use small ice jigs tipped with wax worms or grubs in Angler's Bay in the evenings over weed beds.

West Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Access points can be found at Emerson, Miller's, and Smith's bays and Triboji Beach.

Bluegills are biting in Miller's, Smith's and North bays along weed beds, and between Pocahontas and Eagle points with small ice jigs tipped with wigglers or wax worms. Northern pike are being caught with live bait using tip-ups in Smith's and North bays.

East Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Fish for yellow bass at sunrise or sunset between Stony and Jingles Point with ice jigs tipped with live bait or a slip bobber and minnow.

Center Lake (Dickinson): Walleyes are being caught on jigging lures tipped with minnow heads or a slip bobber and minnow in the evening.

Sportsman Recreation Area (Palo Alto): Bluegills and crappies are being caught on small ice jigs tipped with live bait.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Yellow bass are still biting on the west end of the lake between Farmer's Beach and the Baptist Camp, and west of McIntosh Woods State Park in the new dredge area. A few walleye and white bass are also being caught while fishing for yellows. Jigging spoons and minnows below a bobber are the best techniques. Ice depth remains 20 to 25 inches, but warm days are deteriorating the access points. Use caution with the changing ice conditions this time of year.

Silver Lake (Worth): A few yellow perch are being caught fishing the north side of the lake by the county park and near the boat ramp on the southwest side. Try using a jig tipped with a minnow for best results.

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Black Hawk Lake (Sac): Seams are opening at Black Hawk Lake although ice is still 12 inches thick. Care should be used, especially with all the rain on Thursday.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Fishing is still fair to good for walleye on live minnows in 5 to 7 feet of water on the north shore, inlet and south shore.

Brushy Creek Lake (Webster): Lake ice has stabilized with the cooler weather but remains unsafe around trees and by the spillway. A few nice crappies and bluegills have been caught at sunrise and sunset.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: In **Pool 9**, some northern are being caught on tip-ups in Fish Lake near Army Road in New Albin. Indian Slough has been producing some big crappies. Bluegills are being caught on Desoto Bay. The Lansing power plant is also producing catches of fish. Bluegill can be caught off of the bottom using night crawlers. Some walleye and northern pike are also being caught.

In **Pool 10**, saugers can be caught below the dam at Lynxville using a jig and minnow. A few walleyes can also be caught there on jigs with twister tails. Use the smallest jig possible that can get to the bottom for best success. For ice fishing, angling has slowed near the spillway, but some northern pike and bass can be caught using shiners on tip-ups. Sorting of panfish is going on at the spillway as well. Areas such as Fennimore Slough, Big Missouri, Spring Lake, and Mud Sloughs have been producing some bluegill and crappie north of Prairie du Chien. The Sny Magill Access has generally been slow, but some fish are still being reported. Areas to try include Sandbar and Norwegian Lake. Methodist Lake has been the most consistent producer in the area, but you may need an airboat to get there after the past warm spell. All year, Bussey Lake has been hit or miss for bluegill and crappie—there are fish to be caught, but you may need to move around to find them.

In **Pool 11**, sauger fishing below the dam at Guttenberg has been good using a jig and minnow. Both launches into the Guttenberg tailwater are open. Tailwater anglers can now boat and walk to Swift Slough to catch crappie and white bass. Only a few bluegills are being reported. Some ice fishing is taking place on Burtom Lake south of Cassville, but sorting of bluegills is required. In both of the new project areas in lower Pool 11 (Mud Lake and Sunfish Lake), yellow perch, pumpkinseeds and a few largemouth bass are being caught, but they require much patience. Anglers with electronics report that they are still seeing schools of perch and bass, but they seem to be quite finicky. The best fishing seems to be later in the afternoon.

Interior rivers in northeast Iowa have lost much of their ice and many are a little high, but fishable. Now might be the time to try angling for walleye below the dams and in those deep holes. Try using a jig with a slow presentation.

Cedar (Black Hawk and Bremer) and **Shell Rock rivers** (Black Hawk and Butler): Open water conditions exist and anglers are beginning to fish for walleye by boat and shore using jigs. Action has been slow so far, but is expected to improve as water temperature rises into the upper 30s.

Maquoketa River (Delaware): The river is mostly free of ice and some fishing is occurring below the Lake Delhi Dam for walleye, but action is slow.

Wapsipinicon River (Buchanan): The river is open in sections, but remains largely ice-covered above dams. Boat ramps at Independence, Three Elms and Iron Bridge were not open as of February 23. Anglers are fishing from shore for northern pike and walleye below the dams in Independence and Quasqueton, but action has been slow.

Black Hawk and Bremer County area lakes and ponds: Ice fishing continues to be slow with no hot bites reported. Expect action to pick-up during the next weeks as oxygen levels improve and spring approaches. Ice anglers should use caution on lake edges and near inlets as ice has eroded during recent warm weather and melt events.

Brinker Lake (Black Hawk): Anglers are catching some crappies around and after sunset using spikes, crappie minnows, and Gulp maggots.

Casey Lake (Tama): Fishing is fair for bluegills using small ice jigs and wax worms. Use caution entering and leaving the ice, as well as near the inlet and outlet.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Anglers continue to work to get fish but nice crappies and bluegills are starting to bite. Fish are being caught using a jig tipped with a wax worm or a small minnow. Try various depths as fish are likely suspended off the bottom at this time of year. Evening is the best time to fish.

Lake Meyer (Winneshiek): Fishing picked up a bit this week especially around the jetty. Anglers have been using dark or purple colored jigs tipped with a wax worm. Crappies were biting but it takes the soft touch to get fish. Bluegill, largemouth and even some small perch were taking bait. Fish lures about 3 to 6 feet under the ice. The best time to fish seems to be around mid-day.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Angling has tapered off this week due to the snow covering the ice. Runoff in the stream is making the water cloudy so use light colored jigs. Try fishing a different spot if a fish doesn't nibble right away. Also try suspending lures in 2 to 5 feet of water this time of year.

Northeast Iowa Trout Streams: Trout streams are in good to excellent condition and are expected to remain fishable as daytime temperatures remain around freezing. Some streams are even experiencing insect hatches on warm afternoons.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

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